REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-6, 9-11, 13, 14, 18-20, 23-25, 28-30, 32, 33, 37, 38, 116, 131 and 133-146 are pending in the present application. In the Office Action, claim 146 is objected to because of informalities. By this amendment, claim 146 has been amended. No new subject-matter has been introduced. The Applicants acknowledge and appreciate that claims 1, 4-6, 9-11, 13, 14, 18-20, 23-25, 20-30, 32, 33, 37, 38, 116 and 137-146 have been allowed over the prior art of record by the Examiner. In view of the following remarks, the Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of claims 131 and 133-136.

Claims 131 and 133 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over ***Hudetz***. The Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of claims131 and 133.

In the Office Action mailed October 12, 2006, on page 8, the Examiner acknowledges that the "permitting the group of users to communicate with each other through the common web page" step of claim 131 is not taught by ***Hudetz***. However, the Examiner takes "Official Notice" to make a case of obviousness. In particular, the Examiner alleges that since it is known that users can communicate with each other through chat rooms, message boards, forums, and the like, located at a web site, a group of users can communicate with each other through a common web page. The Examiner further alleges that ***Hudetz*** teaches a group of users accessing destination information, a URL, corresponding to the received bar codes. The Examiner concludes that the combination teaches that the URL of the chat room, message boards or forums location on a website would be associated with the received bar codes information. The Examiner's reliance on "Official Notice" in combination with ***Hudetz*** is erroneous for at least the reasons set forth below.

Claim 131 calls for permitting the group of users to communicate with each other through a common web page based on information encoded in each bar code and based on destination information corresponding to the received bar codes, wherein the destination information is accessible from the Internet portal. The Examiner relies upon ***Hudetz*** to describe a group of users accessing destination information, a URL, corresponding to the received bar codes insofar as it teaches that the URL information is stored in the relational database 60 is suitable for locating a resource on the Internet 20. However, ***Hudetz*** does not teach or suggest these claimed features because ***Hudetz*** is concerned with giving users a convenient access to information located on computer networks, such as the Internet. In ***Hudetz,*** a group of users using bar code readers is not permitted by the service provider 22 of ***Hudetz*** to communicate with the common web page. As such, in ***Hudetz,*** the group of users only allowed access to the URL stored in the URL field 74 for independently connecting to a web-site and not to a particular web page of the web-site being used for communications by multiple users.

Instead, the recited claim feature specifies that the act of permitting the group of users to communicate with each other through a common web page is based on information encoded in each bar code and based on destination information corresponding to the received bar codes. In ***Hudetz,*** the received UPC code is used for a look-up of a resource destination, *i.e.*, a particular Internet address, such as a web-site URL that locates a resource on the Internet. The received UPC code does not enable communication for a group of users using bar code readers through a single web page common therebetween since destination information corresponding to the received bar codes is not used for selectively connecting to a particular location of an associated resource destination being common to the group of users using bar code readers. Accordingly, ***Hudetz*** either combined or considered alone at least do not teach the claimed combination of the

permitting step. Dependent claim 133 is allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 131.

Hudetz describes techniques for accessing a URL suitable for locating a resource on the Internet in a field of records of a database. For example, information in the field 74, such as URL information is stored in the relational database 60. See ***Hudetz,*** Figures 1 and 4, col. 7, lines 2-42. The stored URL information is suitable for locating a resource on the Internet 20 since the URL information described by ***Hudetz*** functions as a more precise kind of network address than a domain name. See ***Hudetz*** col. 5, lines 61-65.

With respect to ***Hudetz***, the Examiner argues that ***Hudetz*** teaches the act of permitting the group of users to communicate with each other through a common web page based on information encoded in each bar code and based on destination information corresponding to the received bar codes. The Examiner's reliance on ***Hudetz*** is erroneous as it merely teaches that the URL information is stored in the relational database 60 is suitable for locating a resource on the Internet 20. Claim 131 calls for permitting the group of users to communicate with each other through a common web page based on information encoded in each bar code and based on destination information corresponding to the received bar codes, wherein the destination information is accessible from the Internet portal. However, in relying on ***Hudetz***, the recited claim feature that specifies the act of permitting group of users using bar code readers to communicate with the common web page is not considered. For example, the bar code may comprise information that includes data, which provides an indication of destination information. In contrast, ***Hudetz*** uses the UPC code in a table at the database to directly look-up the actual destination address, *i.e.*, URL of an Internet web-site. As noted earlier, in ***Hudetz***, there is no bar code information that is received and enables communication for a group of users using bar code readers through a particular web page common therebetween. As such, ***Hudetz*** does not use

destination information corresponding to the received bar codes for selectively connecting to a particular location of an associated resource destination being common to the group of users using bar code readers.

As noted above, ***Hudetz*** describes a service provider 22 and two remote nodes 24 and 26 where the service provider 22 is a local Internet access provider. See ***Hudetz***, col. 5, lines 6-9. To access resources of a particular remote node 24 or 26, a local host 28 requests the resources from Internet 20 using the appropriate URL. See ***Hudetz*** col. 5, lines 61-65. The service provider 22 includes a relational database 60, which could be resident on the local host 28 or another remote computer 24 or 26. See ***Hudetz***, col. 7, lines 51-53. The database 60 includes records 62-68. Each record 62-68 of the database 60 contains four fields 70-76. The UPC fields 70 and 72 contain a UPC product identification number and field 74 holds a URL suitable for locating a resource on the Internet 20. See ***Hudetz*** at col. 7, lines 6-10. An end-user accesses the Internet 20 using local host 28. See ***Hudetz***, col. 5, lines 13-14. That is, the local host 28 is used to access Internet resources (or "Web sites") on remote nodes 24 and 26. See ***Hudetz***, col. 5, lines 48-49.

As such, ***Hudetz*** locates a resource on the Internet in which Internet addresses, in the form of URLs are accessed for end-users. When a user scans a bar code, an Internet address is accessed by a web browser and the web site identified by the stored Internet address is retrieved. ***Hudetz*** discloses variations of this technique but in all of the disclosed embodiments, the specific Internet address which is to be accessed is stored in the relational database 60 and is directly used by the local host 28 to access resources on remote computers, particularly web sites. See ***Hudetz*** at col. 3, lines 16-18. To access a URL suitable for locating a resource on the Internet in the field 74 of record 62-68 of the relational database 60, ***Hudetz*** reads the UPC product identification number based on the UPC symbol 46 by an input device 44, and transmits it to a web-server on the

local service provider 22.

In contrast to the system of ***Hudetz***, one embodiment of the present invention provides for a remote translation table which will associate information encoded in bar codes with a desired final destination. Thus, changes to destination information can be made without affecting the validity of previously distributed bar code data. The destination information is used for connecting to a destination for accessing a certain kind of network referenced by the identified portion. Because ***Hudetz*** does not disclose (or suggest) providing a method or system which permits a group of users using bar code readers to communicate with a common web page as recited in claim 131, the rejection of the independent claim 131 in view of ***Hudetz*** has been traversed and should be withdrawn. The rejection of the dependent claims should likewise be withdrawn for at least the same reasons.

The Examiner's reliance on the combination of ***Hudetz*** and the "Official Notice" is also erroneous because there is no motivation to combine the references in the manner suggested by the Examiner. In fact, the references indicate that there would be no motivation to combine the teachings in a manner alleged. That is, even though ***Hudetz*** teaches storing URLs in a database, it does not state or even suggest that the URL be accessed from the database.

For one or more reasons presented above, independent claim 131 is allowable. Additionally, claims depending from independent claim 131 are allowable for at least the same reasons.

The Examiner further relies on ***Hudetz*** and U.S. Patent No. 5, 979,762 (***Bianco)*** to reject claims 134-136 dependent on independent claim 131, arguing that claims 134-136 are taught by the combination of these references. The Applicants respectfully disagree and note that for at least the aforementioned reasons indicated above in the context of claim 131, the cited

references, either considered alone or in combination fail to make obvious the claimed features of claims 134-136.

The Examiner rejected claims 134-136 over ***Hudetz*** as modified by ***Bianco.*** The Examiner's reliance on ***Hudetz*** is erroneous. A closer inspection of the cited reference reveals that there is no teaching or suggestion in the manner suggested by the Examiner. The Examiner argues that the bar code symbol 22 and a special decoder in ***Hudetz*** correspond to the "encryption of the bar code information" of claim 134. The Examiner, however, concedes that ***Hudetz*** fails to specifically teach allowing at least one user to connect to the Internet portal when encryption of bar code information is not indicated and not allowing the user to connect to the Internet portal when encryption of the bar code information is indicated and connecting the user to the Internet portal depending upon whether the encryption of the bar code information is turned off. To remedy the fundamental deficiency in ***Hudetz***, the Examiner turns to ***Bianco***. The Examiner asserts that ***Bianco*** teaches that a bar code symbol 22 encrypted in a unique format may be appended in front of bar code symbol 12 (see column 4, lines 1-9, of ***Bianco***). In the Office Action on page 8, however, the Examiner admitted that ***Bianco*** requires a special decoder to translate (*i.e.*, decrypt) the information from the bar code symbol 22. The Examiner then acknowledges that, in ***Bianco***, applications requiring security utilize bar code symbol 22 and a special decoder. In this way, the Examiner concludes that the combination of ***Bianco*** with ***Hudetz*** results in a method where a user would be connected through an Internet portal if the barcode was not encrypted, or the user would not be connected through the Internet portal if the bar code was an encrypted bar code and when a special decoder was not used. The Examiner alleges that since ***Hudetz*** teaches connecting a user to an Internet portal and ***Bianco*** teaches allowing access in dependence on whether a bar code is encrypted or not, the combination of

Hudetz and ***Bianco*** meets the claimed limitations. However, ***Bianco*** fails to address the above-addressed shortcomings of ***Hudetz*** in view of the reasons set forth below.

Bianco discloses a system in which standard and encrypted bar codes can be used. The standard bar codes can be read by a standard bar code reader. However, the encrypted bar codes require a specialized security bar code decoder into which the user, for example, can enter a password to allow the bar code to be decrypted. The Examiner contends that it would have been obvious to use such a bar code with the system of ***Hudetz*** and that the combination would result in the claimed invention. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Since ***Bianco*** tests whether encryption was used for an actual bar code symbol 12 by determining whether an encrypted bar code symbol 22 associated with the actual bar code symbol 12 needs processing by a special decoder, the presence of the bar code symbol 22 alone does not indicate whether the actual bar code symbol 12 itself was encrypted. That is, in ***Bianco***, the encrypted bar code symbol 22 appended in front of the actual bar code symbol 12 indicates that encryption for the appended bar code symbol 22 was used and the user would not be connected if the special decoder was not used. In other words, ***Bianco*** connects the user to the Internet portal based on whether a special decoder was used to decrypt the encrypted bar code symbol 22 appended to the actual bar code symbol 12 and not whether encryption of the actual bar code symbol 12 information was indicated.

There is no teaching or suggestion in either ***Hudetz*** or ***Bianco*** to connect to the Internet portal when encryption of the bar code information is not indicated and not allowing the user to connect to the Internet portal when encryption of the bar code information is indicated. That is, a user is not selectively allowed to connect to the Internet portal depending on whether or not a scanned bar code indicates if this bar code was encrypted. Accordingly the rejection of claim

134 as being obvious over ***Hudetz*** in view of ***Bianco*** is improper and should be withdrawn. Likewise, the claim 135 feature of connecting the user to the Internet portal depending upon whether the encryption of the bar code information is turned off is not rendered obvious in a *prima facie* manner by the cited references. Dependent claim 136 is also allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 134. Additionally, ***Hudetz*** and ***Bianco*** also do not teach the providing step of claim 136.

In light of the arguments and amendments presented above, Applicants respectfully assert that all of the claims are allowable. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at the Houston, Texas telephone number (713) 934-4089 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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